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NEWS RELEASE

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Christopher M. Alston Named Judge of U.S. Bankruptcy Court for Western Washington

SAN FRANCISCO — Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit announced today the appointment of attorney Christopher M. Alston as a judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Washington.

Judge Alston was sworn into office today at the U.S. Courthouse in Seattle by District Judge James L. Robart. He fills a vacancy resulting from the retirement of Bankruptcy Judge Karen A. Overstreet. Judge Alston will maintain chambers in Seattle.

“We are pleased to have a practitioner of Mr. Alston’s caliber come onto the federal bench. I expect his experience and knowledge will be of great benefit to the bankruptcy court there in Seattle,” Judge Thomas said in making the announcement.

Judge Alston, 51, was previously with the law firm of Foster Pepper PLLC in Seattle. He joined the firm as an associate in 1989, became an equity partner in 1997, and had chaired the firm’s Creditors’ Rights and Bankruptcy Group since 2010. In his practice, Judge Alston handled contested matters in bankruptcy cases, adversary proceedings, and state court proceedings. He represented debtors, borrowers, guarantors, secured and unsecured creditors, committees, landlords, directors and officers, shareholders, trustees, receivers, and defendants in avoidance sanctions.

Born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, Judge Alston received his A.B. from Princeton University in 1985 and his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School in 1989. He was awarded a Clarence Darrow Scholarship from his law school.

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Judge Alston was a lawyer representative to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference for the Western District of Washington. He also served as a mediator for the district's Judge Thomas T. Glover Mediation Program since 2012 and on its Executive Committee since 2014. He had been co-chair of the Business Bankruptcy Programs Subcommittee for the American Bar Association since 2014. He also has served on the board of directors of the Women's Funding Alliance since 2012 and the Center for Children & Youth Justice since 2014.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Washington received 16,706 filings in calendar year 2014. The court is authorized five bankruptcy judges.

Bankruptcy judges serve a 14-year renewable term and handle all bankruptcy-related matters under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have statutory responsibility for selecting and appointing bankruptcy judges in the nine western states that comprise the Ninth Circuit. The court uses a comprehensive merit selection process for the initial appointment. For reappointments, the court conducts a performance review and considers public comment evaluations.

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